

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Serial No. 10/067,294
Docket No: Q68446

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1 and 2 are independent claims. Claim 8 has been added.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for foreign priority and confirming receipt of the priority document. Applicant further thanks the Examiner for considering the references listed on the PTO 1449 form submitted with the Information Disclosure Statements on February 7, 2002 and August 23, 2002, as was indicated by the initialized returned PTO-1449.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings, alleging that the reference number 1 is not indicated in the drawings. In response, Applicant has amended Figure 4 by adding the reference numeral 1, which indicates the heat developing apparatus to Fig. 4, as is shown in the attached replacement sheet. As such, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection.

The Examiner has objected to the title, alleging that the title is not indicative of the invention. Furthermore, the Examiner has objected to the disclosure, alleging several minor informalities. In response, Applicant has amended the specification and title as shown hereinabove and respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objections.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 2-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite. The Examiner has alleged that the structural relationship between the “rotating body” and “one rotating body constituting the rotating body pairs” is not clear. In

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response, Applicant has amended claim 2. Applicant respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection in view of this amendment.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over JP 2000-330252 (“JP ‘252”) in view of Ogawa et al. (US 6,320,642). Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over JP ‘252 in view of Allen (US 5,893,003).

Applicant has amended claims 1 and 2 to recite that the preliminary heating section heats the development sheet “before the sheet is developed by a developing section.” This amendment is fully supported by the original disclosure at least at Fig. 4 and the discussion thereof.

With respect to the rejection of claims 1 and 2, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection because there is no motivation or suggestion to modify the heat developing device of JP ‘252 so that the resulting heat developing device would meet all of the claims’ recitations.

It is the Examiner’s position that JP ‘252 teaches a heat developing device with a preliminary heating having heating rollers 2A and carrying rollers 2B. The Examiner acknowledges that JP ‘252 does not teach that the rotating body pairs 2A, 2B of JP ‘252 are “arranged so that the conveying direction of the heat developing sheet is changed by at least one pair of rotating body pair in the plurality of rotating body pairs.”

Therefore, the Examiner looks to the curved development heaters of Ogawa and Allen in an attempt to make up for this deficiency. Ogawa teaches a curved development heater 520, and Allen teaches a curved development heater 14.

However, both Ogawa and Allen teach using curved *developing heaters* (developing section), but do not teach or suggest a curved “preliminary heating section.” There is no suggestion in either of these references to use a curved *preliminary heating section*.

In addition, although it is the Examiner’s position that one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to modify the system of JP ‘252 in order to reduce creases, Ogawa does not teach or suggest that the mere use of a curved heater reduces creases in the recording material. Instead, Ogawa discusses the use of a plate heater 520 (developing section) that has *multiple sections* 520a, 520b, 520c, 520d having different temperatures in order to prevent creases from forming in the recording material A. Ogawa at 12:66-13:22 (*compare* prior art development heater 320 in Fig. 1 and development heater 520 in Fig. 19).

Furthermore, the image developing system of Allen is similarly deficient. Although it is the Examiner’s position that one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to modify the system of JP ‘252 in order to maintain proper optical density, it is merely the adjustment of the transport rate of the photothermographic element 12 in the development heater 14 of Allen that allows the image developing system of Allen to prevent reduced optical density by compensating “for the thermal energy loss period.” Allen at 5:1-19. There is no teaching or suggestion that it is the curvature of the heater that provides this advantage.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 1 and 2 at least because neither Ogawa nor Allen teaches or suggests the claimed heat developing apparatus in which the rotating body pairs of a preliminary heating section are

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“arranged so that the conveying direction of the heat developing sheet is changed by at least one pair of rotating body pair in the plurality of rotating body pairs.

In addition, Applicant respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of dependent claims 3-7 at least because of their dependency from claim 1 and/or claim 2.

New Claim

In addition, Applicant has added new claim 8, which depends from claim 3, in order to provide additional claim coverage. New claim 8 is fully supported by the original specification at least by the non-limiting embodiments shown in Figs. 2 and 3, respectively. Applicant respectfully submits that this claim is allowable at least based on its dependency from claim 1 or Claim 2.

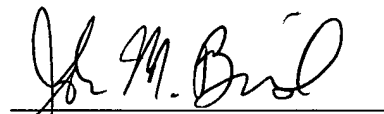
Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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